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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 LAGOS 000197

SIPDIS

STATE FOR G/TIP  
DOJ FOR KYAMOA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/02/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KCRM](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: ICITAP ASSESSES LAGOS, EDO TRAINING NEEDS

REF: ABUJA 770

Classified By: ACTING CONSUL HELEN C HUDSON FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

11. (SBU) Summary: As part of a State Department anti-trafficking grant to the Department of Justice (DOJ) to provide investigative training to Nigerian law enforcement agencies, two International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP) representatives visited Benin City, Edo State and Lagos April 21-23 to assess training needs. In separate meetings with the Nigerian Police Force (NPF), Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS), National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), and NGOs involved in the fight against trafficking, visitors learned that the need for training is widespread and lack of funding limits existing capabilities. The Nigerian agencies emphasized evidence gathering, including financial evidence of trafficking, interrogation techniques, and victim handling as the most pressing training needs. All agreed that coordination is crucial to effectively combat human trafficking. End Summary.

12. (SBU) As part of a State Department Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (G/TIP) \$125,000 grant to the Department of Justice (DOJ) International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP) to provide investigative training to Nigerian law enforcement agencies, two ICITAP representatives visited Benin City, Edo State and Lagos April 21-23 to assess training needs for instruction to be implemented later in 2008.

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Collaboration Essential to Counter  
Highly Organized Traffickers  
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13. (C) The head of the Edo State National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) office, Funke Abiodun, said prostitution trafficking still occurs in Edo, but has been interrupted in Kano and Sokoto. NAPTIP's investigators and staff are constantly watched by the traffickers, Abiodun confided. She emphasized that collaboration between NAPTIP, Immigration, the police, Customs, NGOs and even transport workers is needed to counter highly networked criminals. Most of the major traffickers do not live in Nigeria, she said. The police are supposed to hand over any trafficking cases they encounter to NAPTIP, but often do not do so, in the process destroying evidence and cases. The cases the police do hand over are incomplete and shoddily prepared. While processing a case, the police have even been known to leave traffickers and victims alone together, which further intimidates victims, she said.

14. (SBU) The Edo NAPTIP prosecutors and investigators have a close working relationship, which benefits both and strengthens cases, NAPTIP's Abiodon stated. However, one top investigator who met with ICITAP and PolOff was unable to answer basic questions about his work process and training needs. The top prosecutor explained that even the best investigators sacrifice detail and information for speed, which they believe benefits victims. The Abuja NAPTIP headquarters tries to hire people who can be trusted by the public, Abiodon stated. Since the police are not trusted, none of her investigators are former police officers and have no previous investigative experience.

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Collaboration Results in Successes  
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15. (SBU) Abiodun described two recent cases involving collaboration among federal authorities combating trafficking, one involving two Togolese girls and another involving Cross River State. In the first, the girls were brought into Nigeria as domestic help. After eight years, one was able to escape and told a neighbor, an immigration officer. This case was settled out of court, with each girl being awarded N100,000 (\$854). Both wanted to avoid appearing in court and wanted to return home as soon as possible. In the second, 61 youths were rescued from a truck that had picked them up in Cross River State's Yala area, a key source location of trafficking victims, and was taking them to a larger city to serve as domestic help. This case is currently under investigation.

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NAPTIP Training Priorities  
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16. (SBU) Abiodon prioritized the Edo office's training needs, beginning with training for victim counselors. She also described the high demand for victim assistance and reintegration programs and job training. UNICEF does a lot of work with victims, she stated, but more training in financially viable careers that also incorporates financial and other support to the victims until they find jobs is needed to ensure the success of their new careers. Nigerian law empowers NAPTIP to seize traffickers' assets, but NAPTIP lacks the investigative ability to link assets with traffickers.

17. (SBU) Godwin Morka, Lagos NAPTIP office head, told ICITAP and PolOffs that victims in the Lagos NAPTIP shelter have access to the lawyers prosecuting their cases, which facilitates the trials. He described the working relationship with other law enforcement agencies as good, but stated that even more cooperation would be helpful. His investigators, hindered by a lack of resources, attempt to investigate each case and to conduct follow-up visits when victims return home. Training he and his officers have received has benefited them, but they need further training especially in the area of financial investigations, Morka said. He further stated that the highly organized traffickers are difficult to combat and the ability to legally seize their assets would help investigations.

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Immigration Hopes Technology Will Combat TIP  
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18. (SBU) In a meeting with the Anti-Human Trafficking and Child Labor Unit of the Benin City Immigration office, ICITAP and PolOff heard from Unit Chief Solomon Okosun and his staff that the changes made to the passport regulations have decreased trafficking as well as fraud. All passport applicants must now have a guarantor, whose name is linked with their record and who is held responsible for any wrongdoing by the holder of a fraudulent passport. Nigerians are now only allowed one passport and because biometric data, including thumb prints, is now collected electronically and linked with the passport record, a person cannot apply for multiple passports at different passport agencies.

(Note: This system will link all immigration units throughout Nigeria, but it is not yet fully operational. End Note.) Additionally, there is growing awareness among officers of the use of fraudulent documents to obtain passports.

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Immigration Officers Need TIP Training  
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¶9. (C) Okosun stated that there is no standard trafficking component in immigration officer training. Okosun described the need for improved investigative skills, especially in interviewing techniques. While NIS does not prosecute trafficking cases, it can investigate them, he said.

(Note: Under the law establishing NAPTIP, NIS is not authorized as an investigative agency. End note.) The Child Rights Act, passed by Edo State two months ago, as a result of intense lobbying by the International Federation of Women Lawyers, will further assist NIS in its work, he said, by expanding the legal base for investigations.

(Note: While Okosun emphasized the need for cooperation across agencies ICITAP and PolOff noted a letter in a case file from the Deputy Comptroller of Immigration specifically directing NIS officials not to hand over trafficking cases to NAPTIP. End note.)

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Immigration Officer "Blames the Victim"  
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¶10. (C) The head officer of the Lagos State Immigration Service Anti-Trafficking Mr. Oredipe told ICITAP and PolOff that although trafficking is illegal, Nigerian culture has not yet accepted its illegality. Moreover, some cultural stereotypes fuel trafficking; "some tribes are hyperactive sexually" and thus are more heavily recruited, Oredipe noted.

(Comment: Oredipe's statement is less a reflection of local cultural values than of this official's skewed perspective, and typifies the lac of understanding among even better educated and highly ranking officials. End comment.)

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Investigations Want to Follow the Money  
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¶11. (C) Oredipe stated the traffickers are organized in a manner similar to drug cartels and requested training to help investigate the underlying finances of trafficking. He explained that five officers in his unit are assigned to handle trafficking cases in addition to other duties. He also described the lack of funding and ability of victim service providers and law enforcement officials. He concluded by implicating the embassies and consulates as complicit because the prostitutes "can easily get visas. Somebody is manipulating these systems," Oredipe stated.

(Comment: Oredipe and others who hold this view may benefit from a presentation on visa procedures during any upcoming training. End comment.)

¶12. (SBU) Oredipe estimated that 40-50 women weekly, mostly from Edo State, are returned from Europe. Many women are trafficked through Togo, Ghana and the Ivory Coast, which are all both destination and transit points. Equatorial Guinea, Spain and Senegal are emerging as new transit points. Oredipe said the overall number of adults being trafficked is decreasing even as the number of trafficked children is increasing. He also reported an increase in the number of victims from Benin coming to work in Nigeria as domestics.

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Police Too Need Financial Investigative Skills  
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¶13. During a visit with the Edo State Police Anti-Trafficking Unit, Mr. Nnacho told ICITAP and PolOffs that of the approximately 7,000 police officers in Edo State, 29 are assigned to handle trafficking cases. The officers assigned to the trafficking unit also train other police officers, and their unit has received infrequent training from NAPTIP and UNICEF. Nnacho told ICITAP and PolOff that the training

manual now used for all incoming officers does include a section on trafficking. Nnacho described the constant change in trafficking patterns, and how his team needs to keep abreast of them. As most victims come from the rural areas, he said, it is difficult to investigate and handle each case without resources, which also hinders their preventative efforts. An additional challenge, he stated, is the weak Edo State trafficking law, which does not allow for accomplices to be arrested. The law also does not provide specific funding for anti-trafficking efforts. Nnacho described a good working relationship between the Police and other agencies and NGOs in Edo State, but stated that collaboration could be improved. Nnacho also stated his officers need training in financial investigations.

¶14. (SBU) Joseph Fanajin, Lagos State Police Trafficking officer, told visitors that policing requires constant capacity building to counter the international and shifting nature of trafficking. Fifty six officers of the NPF were trained using UNICEF's anti-trafficking best practices but still need training on money laundering and fraud in order to be able to deprive the traffickers of resources. He said while police are trained in general investigations, there are nuances in trafficking finance and money laundering with which they need help. His unit struggles to keep up with the constant shifts in trafficking patterns, Fanajin stated. Each state with a serious trafficking problem has a dedicated counter-trafficking NPF unit while states with less serious problems use general investigators. As they do not yet have a central database to share information, Fanajin said, informal collaboration with other agencies is key.

¶15. (C) Fanajin made a special trip to show ICITAP and PolOff the anti-trafficking training manual developed by the NPF, which had not been at his office; it appeared not to have been used. The manual appeared to be a UNICEF publication with a Nigerian State Police cover placed on it. Fanajin also said that if trafficking is reported to the police, and if NAPTIP doesn't handle the case well, the police get involved in the matter.

(Note: Police involvement in this situation runs counter to NAPTIP law. End note).

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NGO Coalition: More Outreach Needed

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¶16. (SBU) The Coalition to Stop Trafficking in Women and Children of Edo State raised many of the same points as law enforcement officials. However, they noted, law enforcement agencies are not trusted by most people which complicates efforts to fight trafficking. Coalition members added that trafficking is usually a crime that involves family members, and that familial bonds are hard to break, making investigation difficult. As trafficking involves transport, the coalition recommended outreach to transport workers with anti-trafficking messages. Training should include judges as well as lawyers.

¶17. (C) Comment: While all agencies appear to be coordinating their activities to a degree, it is clear that improvements can be made. Future USG trainings should take into account the challenges associated with perceived overlaps in jurisdiction and resultant territoriality, investigation techniques and differences in handling of victims, and help address them. End Comment.

This cable has been cleared by Embassy Abuja.  
HUDSON